13. Treat your (real) sister well! If she scolds you, leave her alone (that is, do not scold her in return); it is nothing to you! Do not beat her, either, because, after all, for the money that is paid for the marriage of your sister, you will in turn buy a wife for yourself. If you beat your sister, she may possibly die through sorcery (this means that in her anger over the maltreatment she might take her life, something which does indeed happen), and you will have no money and no wife, and people will not respect you, and so forth. /290/

14. If you are the older of two brothers and you are married and have a daughter, then do not marry another woman with the marriage portion that you get for the daughter; instead, leave the daughter (or the money) to your younger brother. If, as the eldest, you have acted in such a way, you will enjoy the same honor and respect among your brothers as your father does.

15. Your father tells you all these good /Fig. 87 appears here in the original text/ principles and bits of advice not in order to make you, his son, bad (that is, through lack of trust or lack of respect for him), nor does he do so in order to limit your freedom, but because he desires that you will not bring any unpleasantness (quarrels) into the house, which will harm him and you. For when I have paid two or three times, I will be tired of (disgusted with) these things, and it may not be long before I have no wife left in the village (that is, he would be a poor man, because wives mean money, and he would have spent all his money for the fines of his son).

The attentive reader, in looking through the earlier sections of this book, will not have failed to note the strict patriarchal tendency of the Pangwe. It is clear, therefore, that the father supervises the education of the child and especially of the adolescent boy. He does this in an ideal manner -- even among us it would be regarded as ideal -- by becoming his son's best friend and by supporting and advising him in all the important problems of life.

Of course, the mother is dear to the Negroes and cherished by them as she is everywhere else in the world, but natural respect and shame in her presence prohibit the son from telling her

[857]
[854]
[291]
[142]

Fig. 87. Boy about Seven Carrying a Child, Bébai (Esseng Family), South Cameroons.

861 everything that is on his mind. Also, any kind of influence in
593 the family unit is wielded only by the chief wife and /291/ even by her only to a limited extent. In all problems of life the father, as head of the family, remains the real friend and counselor of his son, as does the mother for her daughter.

861 In this way the love of the parents gently leads the child
593 through the realm of youth. However, once the boy has matured
578 into a young man, the obstinacy with which nature has to a spe-
626 cial degree endowed the Pangwe, sometimes asserts itself even in the face /Fig. 88 appears here in the original text/ of paternal authority. In such a case, it is sometimes only the most effective and most feared means of education that helps to lead the

[Text continues on page 168]

861 593 578 626 rebellious son back to gentler modes of behavior, namely, the public curse. The curse (ebɔ̀n(ọ); verb, a bɔ̀nɔ) may be pronounced by the father or the mother upon the son, as well as by the eldest son as the father's representative, especially after the father's death, upon a younger brother. In the majority of cases, however, it is the father who pronounces the curse upon his son. The cause for such a pronouncement is continual disobedience, for instance, if the son, despite repeated warnings, takes advantage of the father's wives. The father then stands in the middle of the village square in order to be heard by the people, usually in the morning when they are all at home, or he summons them all to the meeting house and speaks to them somewhat as follows: "This person, my son, continually acts counter to my commands, etc.; therefore from this time on he shall be successful in nothing, he shall acquire no more things (through purchase and trade of gifts), he shall have no success in hunting; when he goes to a girl she shall 'look upon him as dirt' and grant him no love. For he shall be cursed." A definite formula is not prescribed in most regions; only in the north of the Pangwe region they say: "ma yɔ̀n(e) oa" (Jaunde), that is, "I curse you." /292/

In most cases, the curse actually is followed by the consequences threatened by the father, at least insofar as they concern the son's social position. News of the curse spreads everywhere, and nobody wants to have anything more to do with the cursed one; wherever he goes he is looked at askance or even heaped with abuse and ridicule. In his father's village he will be *completely unacceptable. As a result,* the son is soon tired of this unbearable state of affairs and now tries to induce his father to remove the curse. He requests him through friends or relatives to remove the curse from him, or he approaches his father through his mother, but then by way of her brother, since "she is afraid of her husband."

If, in response to these requests and the son's promise that he will improve, the father is prepared to nullify the curse, the son must first of all -- if he is an adult -- pay him a goat or -- if he is not an adult -- a chicken. Contrary to the usual custom of adding every piece of livestock to the marriage portion for more wives, the animal paid as compensation by the son is consumed by

861 the parents and relatives. Thereafter, the son is summoned to
● 593 appear in the village the next day. The father again assembles
626 all the people in the meeting house and makes a long speech in
578 which he rehearses the entire affair from his point of view down to the smallest details. Finally, at the conclusion of his speech, he touches upon the actual purpose of the gathering and proceeds to remove the curse. The formula with which he does so is approximately as follows:

[539] ma tɛ̄'i matɛ'i,[1] ma kábe ma,
I have imposed curse (1) (?), I disengage myself (from

1. matɛ̄'i, = the imposed curse, a va matɛ̄'i = to remove the (imposed) curse; the root a tɛ̄'i = to tear oneself away from, to depart from home, otitɛ̄i = star (see Vol. II, pages 85 and 86).

ma nīme ma, -- ósūɛ
it), I make straight myself -- (into the) water

nkīāi; Chorus: mān.
down. Chorus: Ready, past.

The texts of the formulas, which are frequently extended through the introduction of comparisons and which do not, of course, correspond word for word, are evidently all very old since they are very hard to understand and sometimes not intelligible at all.

[201] At the same time the father spits into his son's hand to indicate that what he took away from him by means of his words (symbolized by the spittle) he is putting back in his power (hand), or the father bites off -- this is the procedure among the Jaunde -- [824] a piece of the stalk of a Costus (Zingiberaceae) and spits it out. In so doing he casts out all the bitterness from his heart (Costus stalk is bitter).

519 Furthermore, a curse may be pronounced by the first wife
595 against her husband, in case he treats her badly and always neglects her in favor of others. The curse is either pronounced

586 The day on which the woman is to come out of the hut, she is bathed
535 and anointed with an oil (mbon nzũi) and is seated on a stool placed in the middle of the village square. Other women sing and dance around her and give her a new name to represent a wish she has made.

There is no religious ceremony.

583 There also used to be a marriage by exchange of wives (mvole bunanga). With the mere consent of the women concerned, two men could exchange their wives. The parents of the wives did not interfere except to verify the amounts of the dowries and to make sure that the husband of the wife with the lesser dowry had fully paid the difference to the other.

593 The relations between married couples are simple: the man must
562 lodge his wife and clear the brush from the site where she will make her plantings; on the other hand, the wife owes absolute fidelity and obedience to her husband, who has the right to beat her. The woman has no authority in the household; she is hardly more respected than
[833] a domestic animal; she owns in her own right only the cooking utensils and the tools for planting and fishing, and does not have the right to own
[834] animals. Prohibition of sexual relations is rigidly observed during pregnancy, during lactation, and in the night preceding departure for the hunt, work at the forge, and various [other] tasks. If the prohibition were not observed, these tasks would be unsuccessful.

595 Polygamy is the present custom among the Fan. The first wife has authority over the others, who must obey her. She receives the largest share of everything and assigns household chores and field work. The husband sleeps with each of his wives for three days.

684 In adultery, only the wife is punished. She is beaten and her ac-
837 complice pays an indemnity to her husband. This indemnity amounts to a quarter of the dowry. The wife confesses her adultery only when forced to by a series of corporal punishments which range from blows to being tied to a tree full of ants (akokum).

586 Repudiation is accomplished without difficulty: the man sends back his wife and the dowry is repaid him. The causes for repudiation are repeated adultery, the death of a child as a result of adultery, laziness, practice of fetishism, and excessive surveillance of the husband; sterility is not a reason for [90] repudiation. The children stay with the husband, and the woman, once repudiated, may remarry.

the law has not changed on this point. "No bride price, no marriage" —Sa nsuba, ve alu' e se kik. We shall find this principle again in connection with legitimate descent.

Thus it is the absence of payment of the nsuba that gives their character to free union, ébon, and to adultery, mejian, and makes them really infringements upon the law of property, justifying the fact that customary courts logically refuse to impose a penalty in a case of ébon when the girl returns to her family pregnant (2).

2. This is hard for some magistrates to understand.

A husband must provide his wife with lodging and clothes and must clothe any children he has by her. He must clear the field she will cultivate, provide her with household utensils and, in theory, with meat. He must allow her to visit her parents, to whom he owes respect. He must not use sorcery (3) against her and must respect the

3. Likened to sorcery are fellatio and sodomy, the grounds for numerous divorces from former members of native infantry regiments.

prerogatives of rank that she holds among her co-wives; he is supposed to sleep with her when she is not menstruating nor pregnant nor nursing. He must not beat her beyond what she can stand nor expose her vulva in public. /54/

A woman owes obedience to her husband, to her mother-in-law, and to the first wife, respect to her affinal relatives, therefore to her husband's clan; she must be faithful to her husband and perform her conjugal duty. She is responsible for cultivating the plots cleared for her, for fishing with weirs, for feeding her children, taking her turn at cooking for her husband, for keeping her hut clean and that of her husband when she is sleeping with him, and for helping to build them (it is she who applies the banco onto the frame). She does not have to take care of imported household equipment and clothes because these are biôm of a masculine nature (but the schools and missions are trying to train women to do so). Finally, and above all, she must be prolific: this is her first duty and a great deal will be forgiven her if she performs it.

526 made, but this practice is only very rarely followed in cases of free
851 union, ɛ́bon, even when that is followed by a regular marriage of the
898 natural parents. Illegitimate children, fruits of an ɛ́bon, bobengon, are kept in their mother's clan, where, moreover, they rank socially only after legitimate children.

597 There used to exist a kind of adoption, rare today, of a political
614 rather than family nature, which could almost be defined as naturali-
641 zation. It could only be carried out by the head of an extended family on behalf of an orphan, mone nyui, of another clan (orphans within /56/ the clan being, of course, already considered children of the head of the family). The adopted child, abiaɛ́ mɔ̂ɔ̂ (i.e., "conceived
[839] in the daytime," sexual relations being lawful only between sundown and sunrise), came into the clan with a status analogous to that of the monengon. He remained subject to the marriage prohibitions of his clan of origin.

609 A non-Pahouin outsider permanently residing in a village, a ntabe,
614 may benefit through marriage by alliance, ɛ́lat, which does not thereby make him a member of the clan. He becomes a monekal (sister's son, uterine relative) and his children, though legitimate, belong to their mother's clan.

583 The descent relationship may be broken by paternal or maternal
578 curse, meyo'ɛ́: the parent uttering the curse shows the child his sexual organs, "the place whence he came," while pronouncing a formula oath. The curse is supposed to bring misfortune and death to the offspring accursed, whom everyone avoids. It can only be
[783] lifted by a collective purificatory rite (ɛ́tye, tyɔ̂) in which the whole nda bɔ̂t participates.

3. Age Grades

541 The individual's life cycle is marked by a certain number of transitions, which are accompanied, or were usually accompanied, by rites that will be discussed further on (p. 115). These crises are birth, weaning, puberty, attaining majority, marriage, death. Age grades correspond to the intermediate stages; they are less strictly defined today than formerly.

541 I do not know the exact word for fetus: people say abum, belly.
473 There must be a more precise term, but I think there is a prohibition connected with it, certainly as regards men, although it may now be

brought produce of the locality, the system of directions very probably being ascribed to sexual categories, the northeast area, male and the southwest area, female. It would be advisable to know more about the ritual use of different tools and implements in order to throw more light on the subject. We know that the saber, fa, is essentially male, that the hunting bell tied to a dog's neck, angôñ, is essentially female, that the drum-telephone, nkul, is androgynous (though women are not allowed to use it); the rifle, ngal, is probably epicene, and the same is true for a few other objects, but we know almost nothing about the effect of this sexual differentiation upon property and its conveyance.

In any case, since the introduction of a money economy, personal property /propriété mobilière/ has become almost entirely individual. Personal property /meubles/ that remains collective is primarily so by appropriation, like the equipment of associations, the profits of their subscriptions, sometimes objects bought in common by members of a family because of their cost or function—like the sewing machines obtained from Spanish Guinea after the last war, for instance.

Personal property still involves some restrictions for women and young men, although they are less and less accepted. Respectful sons and submissive wives still allow their fathers and husbands to use the objects acquired by the earnings of their labor, but when they rebel the trend of the courts is increasingly in their favor. However, the obligatory aid arising from family ties still holds good, and to refuse to "lend" something to a monyaŋ is likely to be frowned on, which is a serious matter. Thus there survives a kind of right of collective family use working against individual /ownership of/ personal property.

g. Inheritance, Guardianship

These come about from death or disappearance. A paternal curse did not entail loss of civil rights, but the possessions left behind by an accursed son who quit his village were confiscated and divided among his brothers.

The disposal of possessions left by a dead man, called élik from lik • to leave, took place at the end of the period of mourning, meyep, perhaps /77/ a mbu, six months after death. This waiting period tends to become shorter and in towns usually lasts a month,

6:Alexandre and Binet--107 G-5 (1946-1954) 1958 FH9 Fang FH9

423 continues to have rights over her old garden plots and may gather the
532 harvest from them. Among the Bané and the Boulou the position of divorced women is not the same, but the tendency is so, for when fallow land is cleared, every woman goes back to the plots she used to work four or five years before, and sons may demand plots that have been cultivated by their mothers.

Cacao plantations raise other problems. A man concerned for his children's future may turn over a plantation to a wife or encourage her to make one for their son. In other cases childless women start [573] plantations as a means of providing for old age. Women with children do not have to fear, for their children will look after them. Finally, there is an even more important /83/ change appearing: a matrimonial system of community of property is developing. When a woman has collaborated with her husband to set up a plantation, she has the right upon his death to keep the usufruct. Even if her son inherits the plantation and sells the produce, it is she who collects the proceeds. This is an important development, because it is evidence of a kind of equality between spouses who are keen and efficient in harvesting the produce of the same piece of land. It furthermore shows that the [592] household is a legal reality vis-à-vis the two individuals, on the one hand, the patriarchal family, on the other. (J. B.)

Chapter 6

Principal Elements of Culture

1. Physical and Mental Characteristics

a. Anthropological Data

141 The first travelers describe the Fang as very tall, well built, and with a formidable appearance. This opinion certainly contained a good deal of subjective evaluation, because the figures given, for instance by L. Dugast, some of which are cited below, indicate simply an above-average height:

road. The missions have tried, with unequal results, to ameliorate the fate of old people without children; certain clan "societies" have also been active in this direction, but none of it goes very far. Moreover, the old people accept their lot and occasionally joke about it among themselves with the rather biting irony that seems one of the mental characteristics of the group. Some old people kill themselves "from being tired of life." According to Trilles, some used to burn themselves to death voluntarily. According to Largeau, the heirs took the initiative in this so as to make the inheritance available.

The least wretched old people are those with children, particularly sons (1), since daughters usually live with their affinal family. There

1. Cf. Eza Boto, Ville cruelle (no. 182), for an illustration of relations between mother and son.

does exist a genuine obligation for children to provide parents with food, which is sanctioned by paternal or maternal curse in case of default.

f. Death and the Afterlife

Every death is suspect, but that of a nya mɔ̀ɔ̀ more than another, because a nya mɔ̀ɔ̀ does not die: someone kills him, though it may be none other than himself. Therefore the death of a man of some importance was always followed by an autopsy: the ngengaⁿ would cut open the body and examine the thoracic organs, nlem, the seat of intellect and will, to look for signs of sorcery, the work either of another or of the dead man should his évu have turned against him or been killed by a malignant agency. There also appears to have been a magic process, évɔ̀mɔ̀ɔ̀, that revived the dead long enough to put questions concerning the cause of death.

If the autopsy revealed that the deceased was a sorcerer, nnem, the body was burned or thrown into a large river or perhaps buried at a crossroads far from the village. If he were mie, free of évu, the regular mortuary rites ensued. The body was washed in warm water, massaged and softened, then rubbed with baa dissolved in palm oil, wrapped in a white loincloth, watched over by armed men while the grave was made ready and the relatives /102/ and affinal kin /alliés/